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# INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

CIA/RR GM 65-2  
March 1965

## *INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARIES OF INDOCHINA*



CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND REPORTS

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*INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARIES OF INDOCHINA*

Active or potential disagreement exists on the alignments of several of the international boundaries of former Indochina. Recently published North Vietnamese maps, for example, depict the North Vietnamese-Laos boundary as extending from official and agreed-upon points to the south, as indicated by the dotted line transmitted by Geneva. Cambodian maps indicate important differences between the official Cambodian and South Vietnamese versions of their mutual boundary. This memorandum constitutes a report on the status of all boundaries in Indochina, with special attention to their historical ori-

**Background** Indochina has eight international boundaries (counting the Sino-Vietnam boundary with North Vietnam and South Vietnam as a single boundary), in addition to the provincial military demarcation line between North Vietnam and South Vietnam. No active dispute concerns the maritime boundary of Edzochim -- that with China, Laos and Thailand. The most recent boundary agreement was signed in 1982. It does not resolve the disputed Cambodian border, only on a de facto basis and maintaining a rather vague reservation concerning the 1988 International Court of Justice (ICJ) adjudication of Cambodian

All of the boundaries and the conflicting national attitudes toward them have been important roots in Indonesia's colonial history. On August 17, 1945, the Indonesian Republic was declared at the Merdeka Hall in Jakarta, the capital of the Kingdom of Sunda, and the separate Kingdoms of Javak and Demak (the "central south"), during the 15th century, have walls that for 150 years excluded the Chinese from their cities. In 1945, the Chinese population of the city of Yogyakarta planned a new series of the present boundaries. At that time local leaders extended the boundaries of the city to include the surrounding areas. The Chinese population, present-day Solo, had lived there since the 15th century, as well as the general province of Yogyakarta, which is located on the west bank of the Solo River. On

\* A demarcated boundary is one that has been marked physically on the ground with official pillars or other devices. A boundary established by a set line, either in writing or orally, is called a "line boundary." It may change in orientation, but it cannot be moved.

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**Figure 4.**  
Areas coded by France to Thailand<sup>a</sup>, March 1941 (in km<sup>2</sup>)

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By the beginning of the 16th century the Manchu emperor had reigned Tonkin and Canton. China itself was a single country that extended into the Hwang Ho delta, which the Chinese had forced to evacuate. In the latter part of the 16th century, France, whose king had converted to Protestantism, was invaded by the Huguenots. In the 17th century, demanded a halt to the persecution of Christian converts by the Amurian general, Shun, who had been appointed by the Emperor Kangxi to defend the frontier in the area of the middle Mekong River and the adjoining parts of Laos and northern Vietnam. In 1688, the French general, Soubise, who had been sent to the area, was forced back by French troops. Between 1693 and 1707 Shun seized the following three provinces: Tonkin, Annam and Siam. In 1707 he was forced to withdraw to the south, where he was captured by French troops. Between 1693 and 1707 Shun seized the following three provinces: Tonkin, Annam and Siam. In 1707 he was forced to withdraw to the south, where he was captured by French troops.

islands in the river; in 1902, the areas of the present-day Lao provinces of Sayaboury, Champasak, and Bathansone -- all on the right bank of the Mekong River; and in 1907, the former Cambodian provinces of Angkor and Battambang, which France had relinquished to Siam in 1867.

The other exterior boundaries of Indochina were settled during the period 1887-96. Between 1887 and 1895 China agreed to the delimitation\*\* and demarcation of what are now the North Vietnam - China boundary and the Laos - China boundary. In 1896 Great Britain and France agreed to use the Mekong River as the border between Laos and Burma.

By the close of the 19th century, France had thus created a colonial entity consisting of *Tonkin*, *Imperial Cochinchina*, *Cambodia*, and *Laos*.*Java*, *Penninsula*, *Thailand*, and *Burma*.

sisting of Tonkin, Annam, Cochinchina, Cambodia, and Laos (see Figure 3). Except for minor boundary changes between these components that were largely the result of French administrative actions, this was the Indochina that was conquered by Japan

The Japanese Government, in late 1940, concerned Thailand to attack Indochina.

The Japanese Government, in late 1940, encouraged Thailand to attack Indochina and then, in March 1941, acted as arbitrator to a dispute that resulted in Thailand reacquiring territory from Laos and Cambodia (see Figure 4). In 1946 these territories

reacquiring territory from Laos and Cambodia (see Figure 4). In 1976 these territories were returned to Laos and Cambodia by the Washington Accord between France and Siem. No changes in Indochina's exterior boundaries have been made since this

Summary analyses of both the interior and exterior boundaries of Indochina are agreement, other than the 1962 IDJ decision on the site of the Preah Vihear Temple.

Summary analyses of both the interior and exterior boundaries of Indochina are given on the reverse side of this Memorandum.\*\*\*

- \*\*\* The banks of a river are designated as right or left as one faces downstream.
- \*\*\*\* A delimited boundary is one whose alignment has been agreed upon and described in writing or other formal document. The fact that a boundary is delimited does not mean that it is demarcated or that it can even be located on the ground with precision.
- \*\*\*\* More detailed discussion of the boundaries of the individual countries treated here may be found in the International Boundary Study series prepared by the Office

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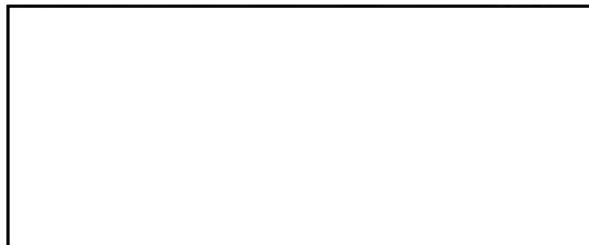
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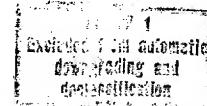
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